

1862-1865

Peace Interrupted: Louisiana's Confederate Capitols

For much of the Civil War, the legislature governed a state partially occupied by Union forces. Their move to **Opelousas** did not remove the Confederate capital from Union threat. Shortly before Opelousas fell to Union troops in January, 1863, the capital changed locations once again, this time to **Shreveport**, well removed from the immediate threat of capture, where it remained until the war's end.

"There is a battle now raging just below Opelousas, I suppose it can't be more than 5 or 6 miles from here. The rattle of arms and the sound of longer guns is continuous,"

-John Bradley's Diary, Opelousas
10/21/1863

Politicians who had opposed secession created a Unionist government in New Orleans. They penned the 1864 Constitution, resulting in the capital's return to **New Orleans** after the war. Seventeen years would pass before political power shifted and Louisiana's capital returned to what many Louisianian's felt was its rightful place—**Baton Rouge**.

Is That a Fact?

- In Opelousas, the legislature met at the St. Landry Parish Hotel (later known as the Lecompte Hotel), while the parish courthouse acted as the capitol.
- Constructed in 1860 for \$19,000, the Caddo Parish Courthouse was demolished 30 years later.
- Gen. Henry W. Allen was inaugurated as Confederate Governor on the Caddo Parish Courthouse steps. His grave is just outside the fire place window.
- The Caddo Parish Courthouse was large enough to house only the legislature; the executive branch met in a nearby house.

St. Landry Parish Courthouse Opelousas 1862-1863



Governor serving here was Thomas O. Moore.

Caddo Parish Courthouse Shreveport 1863-1865



Governors serving here were
Thomas O. Moore and Henry W. Allen.

"With the surrender of General E. Kirby Smith at Shreveport May 26th, 1865, the Confederate Flag ceased to float anywhere on land."

-Jefferson Davis, President,
former Confederate States of America, 1865